

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 12, 2012

Agenda Item: Dome Mountain Wildlife Management Area

Division: Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Bureau **Action Needed:** Approval of Final Rule/Action

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

This is a proposal to renew a 3-year agricultural lease with the Kinkie Ranch on about 150 acres of the Dome Mountain WMA. The lessee will cultivate, plant and irrigate alfalfa and grain hay and retain the first cutting. The lessee will control weeds and continue to irrigate the 150 acres of cropland. The regrowth will be left as a food plot for wildlife use during the winter. The benefit and purpose is primarily for elk and deer winter forage. The primary objective is to retain elk on the WMA to reduce adjacent private land conflicts during the winter and spring.

Public Involvement Process & Results

In March 2012, FWP Region 3 issued a draft environmental assessment (EA) and solicited public comment for the proposed Dome Mountain WMA haying lease with the Kinkie Ranch. At this writing, that draft EA has not been finalized nor has a Decision Notice been rendered. Provided a favorable decision is made, this lease proposal will be presented to the FWP Commission at its April meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

1. No action (no agricultural lease) alternative:
 - FWP would need to allocate resources to crop and manage weeds on the previously cultivated 150 acres.
 - Elk will likely utilize adjacent private land in larger numbers during the winter and spring time periods.
2. Proposed action (provide agricultural lease) alternative:
 - Improves winter forage conditions and availability for wildlife.
 - Provide a mutually beneficially agreement with adjacent private landowner.
 - Provide winter food source on the WMA thereby reducing elk usage of adjacent private property during the winter and spring.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Approve the three-year agricultural lease on Dome Mountain WMA. FWP believes the action will increase forage for elk, allowing them to better use this portion of the WMA and reduce elk usage of adjacent private land.

Proposed Motion

I move to renew the three-year agricultural lease with the Kinkie Ranch on the Dome Mountain WMA.